

America and a vital resource for fishing, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. Lake St. Clair is not the largest body of water in the Great Lakes system, but no body of water is more important. During his tenure on the City Council and especially as Mayor, Mr. Hison has worked to restore Lake St. Clair and address longstanding environmental problems that threatened the health of this vital natural resource. In particular, he has worked closely with my office and the Environmental Protection Agency to begin to address the PCB contamination that was discovered in the Ten Mile Drain adjacent to the Lake in 2002.

In addition, while serving as Mayor, Mr. Hison went beyond serving his community and lent his talents to the entire Southeast Michigan area by taking on several leadership roles with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). He served as chair of both the Data Center and Finance & Budget Committees before being elected as vice chair of SEMCOG in 2007 and later chair in 2010. In 2010 he was nominated by SEMCOG for the open Region IX seat on the National Organization of Regional Councils (NARC) Board which serves Michigan and Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the dedicated public service of Robert Hison and his numerous achievements. I am so pleased to join with the entire community in paying tribute to his achievements, thanking him for years of talented service. I am confident he will continue to play an important role in the community where he is so highly thought of, in addition to enjoying a bit of retirement with his wife Nancy.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN LATINO MUSEUM ACT

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce with Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (FL-18) the Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act—a companion bill that is also being introduced today in the U.S. Senate by our colleagues Senator ROBERT MENENDEZ (NJ), Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID (NV) and Senator MARCO RUBIO (FL).

The Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act we introduce today advances the work of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission—a 23-member bipartisan, congressionally authorized commission of experts that investigated the potential creation of a museum. Through an exhaustive process that involved consultations with national experts, forums in 8 cities (Chicago, Albuquerque, Austin, Miami, St. Paul, Los Angeles, New York City, and San Juan, Puerto Rico), and communication via several online platforms that engaged tens of thousands of supporters, the commission generated valuable input regarding the feasibility of an American Latino museum in Washington, DC.

Over the past 18 years the call has grown stronger and stronger to establish such a museum on our National Mall that shares the rich and full story of what it means to be an American. The effort to create the American Latino Museum dates back to 1993, when a Smithso-

nian Task Force on Latino Issues formally called for the creation of a national museum dedicated to sharing the story of Latinos' historic, cultural and artistic contributions to the U.S. I was proud to introduce the legislation in 2003 that created the National Museum of the American Latino Commission. Five years later, in 2008, Congress passed the bill and it was signed by President George W. Bush. Once appointed by Congress and President Barack Obama, the Commission began its work in 2009 with the support of the Department of Interior and Secretary Ken Salazar. The Commission's final 2011 report and recommendations can be viewed at <http://www.americanlatinomuseum.gov>.

The bill we are introducing responds to the Commission's call for the creation of a national museum in Washington, DC that illuminates the American story for the benefit of all" by preserving, presenting and interpreting American Latino history, art, cultural expressions, and experiences. Specifically, the bill:

(1) Establishes within the Smithsonian Institution a museum to be known as the "Smithsonian American Latino Museum."

(2) Designates the museum's site as the Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall, at 900 Jefferson Drive Southwest in Washington, DC.

(3) Authorizes the Smithsonian Board of Regents to prepare a plan of action for the museum, as referred to in the May 2011 Report to Congress submitted by the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino, in consultation with the Secretary of Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission and federal and local agencies.

(4) Authorizes the Regents to identify and evaluate viable funding models for both the construction and operation of the museum, within 18 months after the bill is enacted.

(5) Authorizes the Regents and Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement that allows for the planning, design and construction of an underground annex facility, in a manner harmonious with and to protect the open space and visual sightlines of the Mall.

Today marks a key moment in our effort to ensure that the contributions of Americans of Latino descent receive the respect and recognition earned by a patriotic community of Americans who have served this nation since its inception and now number over 50 million. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and to supporting the Smithsonian Institution in an important new chapter of its work to increase understanding of the American experience.

HONORING DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSIC DIRECTOR JAAP VAN ZWEDEN

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jaap van Zweden, Dutch conductor and music director for the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Van Zweden has been named 2012 conductor of the year by Musical America after joining the Dallas Symphony Orchestra as music di-

rector just 4 years ago, beginning with the 2008–09 season.

Announced at the annual Musical America Awards, conductor of the year looks to recognize artistic excellence and achievement in the arts. Mr. Van Zweden has demonstrated mastery in both of these aspects, as evident in his most impressive and diverse career over the years.

Before joining the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Van Zweden had worked with the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, among many others all across the world. Mr. Van Zweden currently also serves as chief conductor and artistic director of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras as well as chief conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra of Belgium.

The DSO is truly privileged to have such a talented and accomplished artist to lead their musical program. As a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I am always looking for ways to enrich our creative capacity in Dallas and throughout the Nation. Drawing talent from outside the district is just one method for achieving this noble objective.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we continue to honor the individuals who contribute so much cultural value here at home. Artistic and musical inspirations such as Jaap van Zweden have a positive impact on our communities and I commemorate anyone who chooses to enrich the lives of others by using their talents toward the betterment of society.

IN RECOGNITION OF RENÉE AND ROBERT BELFER

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Renée and Robert Belfer for their foresight and generosity in advancing medical research and countless other worthwhile charitable and non-profit causes. Partners in marriage and philanthropy for more than half a century, Renée and Robert Belfer are being honored this month by the internationally renowned Weill Cornell Medical College for more than two decades of leadership at the Medical College and at an affiliated institution, New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

This month, a groundbreaking ceremony is being held for the new Belfer Research Building of the internationally renowned Weill Cornell College of Medicine. Its construction was made possible by an extraordinarily generous \$100 million donation by Renée and Robert Belfer. The Belfer Research Building will be a state-of-the-art 18-story facility on Manhattan's East Side that will more than double the Weill Cornell College of Medicine's existing research space and enhance its position at the cutting edge of new medical research and discoveries.

The remarkable record of support provided by Renée and Robert Belfer and their family has helped medical researchers and doctors develop enduring solutions to some of today's most pressing and prevalent health problems. In 1980, Arthur Belfer, the father of Robert Belfer, established the R.A. Rees Pritchett